

The Evolution of Employment Security's WorkFirst Services

- Job Search was originally designed to move a majority of TANF parents into employment as quickly as possible.
- The Job Search strategy worked in helping tens of thousands of parents become employed. Job Search activities contributed to the stability of the TANF caseload even during the recent recession.
- The Targeted Wage Initiative was implemented in PY 2003 to enhance job retention and wage progression for TANF parents. The initiative directs parents to the best jobs that they qualify for in their local labor market.
- The Targeted Wage Initiative has improved the average entry level wage for those in Employment Services.
- Building on the Targeted Wage Initiative, Employment Security has redesigned WorkFirst Employment Services.
- A critical element of the redesign of services has been to integrate WorkFirst into WorkSource Centers to improve efficiencies and enhance the service delivery system for all job seekers.
- The Work Skill Assessment, the cornerstone of Employment Services, helps staff determine each parent's employability and to determine the best activities they should engage in to enhance their employability and move toward employment.
- The Work Skill Assessment is required for all WorkFirst parents referred to employment services and is the first activity they engage in upon referral.
- Referrals to training, skill development, and specialized services such as Community Jobs are made directly from the Work Skill Assessment or at any time during participation in Employment Services.
- Each job search customer is assisted in completing a Steps To Employment Plan, indicating how their skills and experience match to employers in the labor market, and directing them to the best jobs they qualify for.
- The Weekly Activity Planner requires staff to individualize activities and expectations for parents to move them forward based on their employment needs.

Facts about Employment Security's WorkFirst Employment Services

Did you know that...

Employment Services is an essential part of WorkFirst

- During Program Year 2004, Job Search provided 31,514 individuals services such as work skills assessments, steps to employment planning and connections to the labor market. (LMEA. June 2005)
- The estimated cost per Job Search customer for 2005 is \$573. (WorkFirst. June 2005)
- About 78 percent of parents in Job Search received a comprehensive Work Skill Assessment within 10 days of entering the program. (LMEA)
- Job Search complements other programs.
 - About half of CJST graduates later participated in Job Search. (LMEA. June 2005)
 - About a third of the Program Year 2004 Community Jobs participants later used Job Search. (LMEA Assessment of those who Started and Completed Community Jobs in Program Year 2005. June 2005)
 - Employment Services made 3,294 direct referrals to training programs during Program Year 2004. (<http://ejasprod.dsns.wa.gov/wit44.asp>)

Employment Services helps TANF recipients become self-sufficient

- About 59 percent of Job Search participants were employed six months after starting the program. (LMEA Entered Employment for TANF Recipients with an Open Job Search from July 2003-June 2004. June 2005)
- The September 2004 entry-level hourly wage for Job Search participants was \$8.88. (DSHS/ESD Job Entries Summary SHS011P5 report. Quarter Three 2004)
- The median hourly wage for Job Search participants who were employed was \$9.50 an hour a year and a half after joining the program. (LMEA Wage Study for Job Search participants during April-June 2003. June 2005).
- Nearly 70 percent of Job Search participants did not return to TANF once they left. (LMEA Return to TANF Rate. June 2005)
- Job Search participants earn an average of \$512 more per quarter than TANF parents who find a job on their own. (WSIPP Outcome Evaluations report, Dec. 2004)

Employment makes a difference in a TANF recipient's life

- Most people (*56 percent*) leave WorkFirst because they found a job. (Use of TANF Activities and Opinions about WorkFirst. 2002 Survey released May 2004)
- People who exit TANF with a job are 3.5 times more likely to have earnings three quarters afterwards. (LMEA. A Follow up on TANF Recipients who Exited July 2003-June 2004. June 2005)